Wikimedia Projects in Education

Ideas Pillars Freedom Knowledge Information Community Verifiability Reliability Trustworthiness Notability Collaboration Sharing

Wikimedia

- The material for this workshop is available online at:
  http://www.wikimedia.org.au//wiki/Publications

Wikimedia

- "Imagine a world in which every single person on the planet is given free access to the sum of all human knowledge. That's what we're doing" - *Jimmy Wales*

What is Wikimedia?

- A non-profit, charitable organisation, headquartered in San Francisco.

- Runs a number of projects aimed at collecting and developing free educational content, and disseminating it effectively and globally.

- Approximately forty paid staff in San Francisco handling administration and software development, but the majority of content is developed and contributed by volunteers.

- A number of self-directed chapters all over the world (including Australia) who promote the Wikimedia projects in their own countries.

Wikimedia and Wikipedia

- **Wikipedia** is the original (and arguably the most successful) project of the Wikimedia Foundation.

- The **Wikimedia Foundation** is the body that develops and promotes Wikipedia, as well as a number of other free content projects.

Free Content?

- Yes, "free!"

- Almost all content available from Wikimedia Projects is released under "free licences," meaning that it can be re-used for any purpose without being encumbered by copyright.

- These licences include the "Creative Commons" family of licences, "GNU Free Documentation Licence", as well as public domain and copyright-expired material.

- Therefore, educators, teachers, and members of the public may take any content they wish from the projects and reuse them for any purpose.

Wikipedia

- The "free encyclopedia", and probably our best known project.

- Over 3 million articles in the English edition alone.

- Almost ten million articles in 282 languages, ranging from major world languages to regional dialects, including Simple English Wikipedia.

Wiktionary

- Our dictionary project, with over 1.6 million entries.

- That compares to only 301,100 main entries in the full version of the Oxford English Dictionary.

- Also contains translations, synonyms, slang, etymologies, anagrams and pronunciation guides.

Wikisource

- "The Free Library" consisting of thousands of digitised books, publications, and other source materials.

- Selected works also have audio recordings of the text available.

- Some works that have not yet been digitised into fulltext have comprehensive page scans available.

WIKIPEDIA
The Free Encyclopedia

Wiktionary
The free dictionary

WIKIMEDIA
FOUNDATION

WIKISOURCE

Wikimedia Commons

- Originally intended as a media repository for our other projects, Wikimedia Commons has become a valuable project in its own right.

- Contains over six million digitised files and media objects, including photographs, maps, diagrams, musical scores, audio recordings, videos, and other files.

Other Projects

- <u>Wikinews</u>: free content news stories.

- <u>Wikiversity</u>: online free content university.

- <u>Wikispecies</u>: collection of taxonomic information on over 240,000 species.

- <u>Wikibooks</u>: open content books and textbooks.

- Others include the MediaWiki project and the Incubator for new projects.

Unrelated Projects

- Not every website or project with "Wiki" in its name is an official project of the Wikimedia Foundation.

- A full list of official projects can be found at:
  http://wikimediafoundation.org/wiki/Our_projects

- Wikileaks is not associated in any way with the Wikimedia Foundation or Wikipedia.

Common Objections and Questions

- "The problem about Wikipedia is, that it just works in reality, not in theory." *Stephen Colbert, US comedian*

Where Does the Content Come From?

- As mentioned earlier, the great majority of content has been contributed by volunteers around the world.

- Some content has been sourced from public domain sources, or has had its copyright expire, thus making it usable on Wikimedia.

Who Can Contribute?

- Anyone can edit content on any page on any Wikimedia project (with some exceptions, which we'll get to in a moment).

- Wikipedia has guidelines about what content can be entered though.

  - It must be verifiable, through independent references and citations.

  - It must be notable.

  - It must adhere to a neutral point of view, and not be biased in any way.

  - It should conform to our manual of style.

  - Disputes on article content should be resolved through a process of discussion and consensus.

What About Bad-Faith Changes?

- Wikimedia refers to these sort of edits as "vandalism".

- Numerous tools exist to combat vandalism.

- "Administrators," who are special users trusted by the community, have several special tools at their disposal to combat vandalism:

  - Articles can be protected to limit who can edit them.

  - Disruptive contributors can be "blocked," and prevented from making any further changes.

  - Unconstructive edits may be "reverted" or "rolled back" off of the live version of the page.

How Accurate are Wikipedia Pages?

- Pretty accurate, as it turns out. It has been observed that there are more "good faith" contributors dedicated to improving the projects than there are "bad faith" contributors dedicated to vandalism.

  - A 2003 IBM study concluded that "vandalism is usually repaired extremely quickly —so quickly that most users will never see its effects."

  - In 2005, Nature magazine said that Wikipedia came close to the level of accuracy in Encyclopædia Britannica and had a similar rate of "serious errors."

  - A 2007 study by German magazine c't concluded that "We did not find more errors in the texts of the free encyclopedia than in those of its commercial competitors."

  - A separate 2007 study by computing magazine PC Pro, which involved deliberately inserting subtle misinformation into Wikipedia articles noted that "despite our stealth attempts the vast majority... were discovered remarkably quickly... the ridiculously minor Jesse James error was corrected within a minute and a very slight change to Queen Ann's entry was put right within two minutes." They went on to conclude that "Wikipedia corrects the vast majority of errors within minutes".

Timeliness

- Due to its open nature, Wikipedia often has information on current events before more traditional sources of information.

- For instance, Wikipedia had information (including references!) on the uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia before major news websites had them.

Evaluating Quality

- Wikipedia has a number of tools to help evaluate article quality.

- In particular:

  - Internal peer review and rating systems.

  - Open discussion about article content.

  - Verification policies.

  - Page tagging.

  - Article and contributor histories.

  - Page protection.

Peer Review and Rating

- There are [7 different ratings](#) for articles:

  - Stub

  - Start

  - C

  - B

  - Good Article

  - A

  - Featured Article

- Good Article, A class, and Featured Articles are managed through a formal review.

Identifying Article Ratings

- Good and Featured Articles are tagged on the main article page.

  - For example, Waterfall Gully and Mount Osmond.

  - Both ratings involve peer review, although not necessarily expert peer review, looking at content, style, prose, referencing, tone and comprehensiveness.

- Other ratings are project based.

  - For example: Great Barrier Reef, which is A Class for Wikiproject Australia, and Education in Australia, which is rated at C Class.

- Ratings apply to a particular version of an article, and both articles and standards may change.

  - Thus there are Good and Featured Article Reassessments, and ratings are linked to a particular version.

Open Discussion

- Discussion pages, unsurprisingly, also contain discussion.

- This is where contributors argue about content, so you can get an idea of why the article is the way it is.

- For example:

  - Julia Gillard, where there was extensive discussion about what to put as her religion.

  - Barak Obama, with discussion about whether or not to mention his use of teleprompters, and how much weight to give the "birther" theories.

- Wikipedia:Lamest edit wars contains a list of some of the more pointless arguments, but many are very serious. At least to those involved.

Verification Policies

- Everything that might be challenged or has been challenged should be referenced to a reliable source.

- This is especially important with biographies of living people.

- Anything challenged and unreferenced can be tagged (see next slide) or removed.

- Debate tends to be about:

    - What counts as a reliable source?

    - Is it worded neutrally?

    - What is the correct weight to give the issue?

- Wikipedia is not about truth, but about verification.

Tagging

- Tags are placed on articles to indicate perceived problems.

- Top level tags refer to the article as a whole. For example:

  - Not meeting a neutral point of view.

  - Written by someone with a conflict of interest.

  - Lack of references, or lack of inline references.

- Inline tags indicated a particular problem:

  - No reference for a challenged claim.

  - The reference didn't support the claim.

Article and Contributor Histories

- Every page has a history tab.

- This lets you see what changes where made, who made them, and when they were made.

  - Used to evaluate the length of time an edit survived - longer times on higher-use articles suggest a better edit. The most recent edits may not have been checked.

  - Used to check who made the edit to find out:

    - What they say about themselves.

    - Their editing history.

    - If there have been any problems with their edits.

- For example, have a look at the histories of John Batman and Climate Change to see who edits them.

Page Protection

- As mentioned, pages can be protected.

  - Semi-protection prevents unregistered or newly register user from editing.

    - Generally used to stop vandalism or editing disputes primarily by unregistered users.

    - For example, John Howard, Norse cosmology.

  - Full protection is normally used to end editing disputes between registered users or registered and unregistered users.

    - For example, Climate Research Unit email controversy

    - Note that the wrong version is always protected.

  - Move protection is used when there is a dispute over the article title.

    - For example: Anne Hathaway

Re-Using Wikimedia Content

- "Not only did we learn something, but we also gave back to society. Also, we didn't just learn how to publish, but we learned how to publish collaboratively." *Kristine Callis, a student speaking about a school project that involved writing and contributing to a Wikipedia article*

Creative Commons

- All Wikimedia content, where possible, is licensed for free use by anyone.

  - The exception are some images that may be trademarked or copyrighted, and are used under fair use, but these are clearly identified.

- This means that it can be used for any purpose, including commercial use.

- You may, depending on the license, have to attribute the original author or authors.

  - Public Domain works don't require attribution, but most CC works do.

- You may also need to "share alike", which means to allow other people to use the derivative work under a compatible license.

Wikimedia Content

- Wikipedia is not censored. That means that it can contain potentially offensive material, and being offensive is not a sufficient reason to remove the text or image.

- However, potentially offensive material does not appear randomly, and is not the norm - it generally only appears on articles where it can be reasonably expected to appear.

- There are options if this is a concern:

  - Duplicating content locally via the CC license.

  - Wikipedia mirrors which contain only selected material. For example, 2008/9 Wikipedia for Schools.

  - Web filters.

  - A current proposal to introduce an opt-in filtering system for Wikimedia content.

School Projects

- There have been a number of successful school projects where students have been encouraged to research and contribute content to Wikimedia projects.

- The flexible nature of the Wikimedia projects means that it can be adapted to fit in with educational curriculums, while the "real world" nature of the sites give students an added incentive to produce something useful.

Possible Ideas

- Have students write Wikipedia articles to the 'Good Article' standard on whatever topic they are studying. Local places, history, and events are usually good starting points.

- For LOTE teachers, consider taking non-English text from our foreign language projects on topics of interest to young people, and have them attempt to translate them.

- Without revealing the source of the information, take the text of an article on Wikipedia that has a warning notice for reliability or bias, and get students to see if they can spot the problems. This is a good way to promote information literacy and teach critical evaluation of sources.

More Possible Ideas

- Have students compose photographs of local landmarks, wildlife and places of interest, and upload them to Wikimedia Commons.

- For older students, get them to create an instructional book for younger children as a part of the Wikijunior project.

- Provide citations and references to a Wikipedia article that does not already have them.

- Examine the article history of an article dealing with a current event, to see how new information came to hand, and how public understanding of the event developed.

- There are, of course, many more possibilities!

Wikimedia Projects

- Wikipedia:

  - http://www.wikipedia.org (Multilingual Portal)

  - http://en.wikipedia.org (English language edition)

- Wiktionary:

  - http://www.wiktionary.org (Multilingual Portal)

  - http://en.wiktionary.org (English language edition)

- Wikimedia Commons

  - http://commons.wikimedia.org

- Wikisource

  - http://www.wikisource.org (Multilingual Portal)

  - http://en.wikisource.org (English repository)

- Meta (A global coordination site for all Wikimedia projects)

  - http://meta.wikimedia.org

Wikimedia Foundation

- Wikimedia Foundation (the US-based organisation that manages the Wikimedia projects on a global scale)

    - http://www.wikimediafoundation.org/

- Wikimedia Australia (An Australian organisation affiliated with the Wikimedia Foundation)

    - http://www.wikimedia.org.au/

School-Related Links

- Wikipedia's frequently-asked-questions page for schools

  - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:FAQ/Schools

- A page detailing some previous school and university projects undertaken involving Wikipedia

  - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:School_and_University_projects

- The "Classroom Coordination" Wikiproject, formed by editors and volunteers to develop a "best practice" framework for collaborations between Wikimedia and educational institutions.

  - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:WikiProject_Classroom_coordination

- Wikipedia for Schools

  - http://schools-wikipedia.org/

Questions

Male Agama sinaita, Jordan. This species is common in deserts around the shores of the Red Sea. While in heat, the male turns striking blue to attract females. Finalist in the Wikimedia Commons Picture of the Year contest.
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